Saeed serving the Maldives

Whenever I see a waiter dropping something I'll have to think of Saeed, our favourite waiter on the Maldives.

Saeed was a bit older than the usual waiters. His hair was grey, he was tall and slender. The lines in his face and the colour of his teeth told the story of a youth or even a life out at sea. Maybe he became too old for fishing and went into serving. We didn't care to ask.

His English was good enough so we usually got what we ordered somehow. It was his outstanding service which made him unforgettable. He was the most clumsy waiter we've ever seen.

We were quite happy when he managed to bring the food to the table without dropping most of it. To his credit we have to admit, he usually dropped the food on our table or directly on us. Most of the items never reached the ground and were therefore save for consumption.

But Saeed never broke anything. He just slipped the fish on the table while serving the plate, knocked over the wine glass with the salad or spilled the coffee all over the fruit platter. After a few days we became experts on saving everything on the table, when he approached. Or we simply caught the chicken leg before it could do any damage.

Most remarkable was Saeed's reaction when things like that happened. He tried to fix the problem as fast as he could, kicking the fish back on the plate, reordering the salad with his bare hands or merging the fruits together again. And then he took a quick look around, smiled and said these unforgettable words:

"Nobody seen!"

We could have asked for a different waiter or even complain about him to the management. But why should we miss these glorious moments, when Saeed had fixed it:

"Nobody seen!"

In the days to come on the Maldives, whenever things went wrong, we just smiled:

"Nobody seen!"

After all these years it still is our favourite phrase for those little things that shouldn't have happened anyway but somehow have to happen just to keep life interesting. Next time you will ruin your best shirt, just cover up, smile und say:

"Nobody seen!"